



City of Seattle
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Human Services Department
Catherine L. Lester, Interim Director

HSD's Commitment to Funding Culturally Responsive Services

Information for HSD Funding Opportunities:

The Seattle Human Services Department (HSD) has developed investment principles that reflect our commitment to funding culturally responsive services to create positive outcomes for service recipients. Agencies applying for investment will demonstrate the capacity to institute these principles through routine delivery of client-centered and strength-based services that are culturally:

1. **COMPETENT**, as demonstrated by “a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or profession that enables that system, agency, or profession to work effectively in cross-cultural situations”.¹ It is “the ability to honor, understand, and respect beliefs, lifestyles, attitudes, and behaviors demonstrated by diverse groups of people, and to diligently act on that understanding”.² It is “the ability to function effectively in the midst of cultural differences. It includes knowledge of cultural differences, awareness of one’s own cultural values, and ability to consistently function with members of other cultural groups”.³
2. **RESPONSIVE** to the cultural and linguistic needs of diverse populations. Agencies have the capacity to effectively serve and engage persons of diverse backgrounds. Agencies commit to practicing cultural responsiveness throughout all levels of the program, including policy, governance, staffing, and service model and delivery. Agencies make every effort to recruit and retain a work force (paid and voluntary) and policy-setting and decision-making bodies that are reflective of the target populations identified in the funding opportunity. For example, for those for whom English is not a primary language, agency staff will work to ensure that service recipients have access to culturally relevant interpreter services and/or written materials available in multiple languages.
3. **RELEVANT** in addressing the cultural needs of diverse populations whose models of engagement or cultural standards differ from mainstream practices. Agencies are staffed with people who have the cultural capacity to create authentic and effective relationships and provide culturally congruent services for members of specific cultural groups and/or communities of color. Commitment and experience of the agency reflects effective, mutually beneficial relationships with other organizations (such as grassroots or community-based organizations, churches, community networks, etc.) that are reflective of the populations being served via the investment.
4. **ACCESSIBLE** through language, location, and delivery style. Agencies have the capacity to overcome mainstream barriers and/or provide effective alternative strategies that enable service recipients to easily access mainstream and nontraditional programs and services.

¹ Cross, T., Bazron, B.J., Dennis, K. and Isaacs, M.R. (1989) Towards a Culturally Competent System of Care (Vol. 1). Washington, DC: National Technical Assistance Center for Children’s Mental Health, pg. 121.

² Coyne, C. (2001) “Cultural Competency: Reaching Out to All Populations”. PT Magazine, pgs. 44-50.

³ York, S. (2003) Roots and Wings: Affirming Culture in Early Childhood Programs. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, pg. 161.